



Creating faith pathways

sermon outline

A religious leader and a soap maker went for a walk together. The soap maker said, "What good is faith? Look at all the trouble and misery in the world after thousands of years teaching about God, truth and peace – after all the prayers and sermons. If Christianity is good and true, why should this be the case?"

They continued walking until the religious leader noticed a child playing in the gutter.

"Look at that child! You say that soap makes people clean, but look at the dirt on that child! With all the soap in the world, the child is still filthy. I wonder how effective soap is after all."

The soap maker protested, "But soap can't do any good unless it is used!"

"Exactly," replied the religious leader. "So it is with faith."

We create faith pathways for people in this world when they see the Christian community living out their faith as followers of Jesus.

"Not many people without a religious faith are thirsting for theology from Christians. Many of them are thirsting for life in all its fullness, which is what Jesus came to give us (John 10:10). So let's give it to them!" (Phil Needham, Christ at the Door: Biblical Keys to Our Salvationist Future, Crest Books, The Salvation Army USA National Headquarters, Alexandria, 2018)

Sharing and growing in faith is a key mission focus area for The Salvation Army. We share the love of Jesus by helping people develop their spiritual life by creating faith pathways to know and serve Jesus. The idea of being on a pathway with and toward God is not new.

PPT "Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways" (Proverbs 4:26).

"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).



PPT “You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence” (Acts 2:28).

“I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6, NKJV).

A pathway is a means of getting from one place to another. Some pathways are straight, direct and smooth. Others seem long and difficult. We each have different faith pathways to Christ – and different pathways with Christ.

Moving along that pathway involves a series of steps as we put one foot in front of the other and keep moving forward. If we stop moving forward, we never get to the destination. At times, we venture on paths that simply stop and take us nowhere. Other times we have stopped because there was an obstacle or hurdle that was too difficult for us to navigate.

John Bunyan’s allegory, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, highlights the different challenges and obstacles that we all face on our faith pathways through life – including pride, greed, laziness, fear and suffering.

The Bible encourages us to take care in our life journey – and to seek pathways that lead to a full and flourishing life. The Christian faith sees this in following Jesus, who said that he had come to bring life, and bring it to the full (John 10:10).

Share a salvation story from your community or from the Others collection online:
www.others.org.au/salvation-stories/

PPT Watch Ansu’s Story (2020)  www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6EbhLW2eEo

Coming to know and trust Christ, and growing in maturity, service and love for others, is a lifelong process. In the Bible, we see a range of different people from different backgrounds come to faith in Jesus via different pathways.

- A Samaritan woman has a surprising meeting with Jesus who shares a drink with her and engages her in conversation. She then introduces him to others in her community that come to faith (John 4:1–42).
- A wealthy tax collector, Zacchaeus, comes to faith when Jesus shares a meal with him. He is so convicted that he gives half of his possessions to the poor (Luke 19:1–10).



- Many people come to faith in Jerusalem as they meet and see a vibrant community of Jesus followers engaged in prayer, Bible teaching and sharing meals together (Acts 2:42–47).
- An Ethiopian eunuch comes to faith as he seeks to understand God’s Word and Philip helps explain the meaning to him (Acts 8:26–40).
- Lydia, a Philippian businesswoman comes to faith at a prayer meeting when Paul speaks to her about Jesus (Acts 16:11–15).
- Dionysius, Damaris and others come to faith after hearing Paul speak about God at the Areopagus meeting in Athens (Acts 17:16–34).

What is common to all of these stories?

They all involve people in relationships and conversations with people of faith. They all involve stories of people meeting with Jesus – either in person or through others sharing the good news about Jesus.

In what ways are the faith pathways different?

We see a very diverse group of people coming to faith in Jesus – different ethnicities including Jews (Zacchaeus), Greeks (Dionysius, Damaris), a Samaritan woman and an Ethiopian eunuch; and different genders: men, women and a eunuch.

Some come through hearing about Jesus in a private conversation and some through preaching to a large group. Others find Jesus through seeing a Christian community at work in loving and serving people with generosity and grace.

Creating faith pathways is joining with God in his mission in the world. It is holistic mission because it involves caring for the whole person – physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. It includes both the proclamation and the demonstration of the “good news” of what God has done in Jesus Christ.

Jesus has initiated a new community that expresses God’s love, forgiveness and grace to people in word and deed – in speech and practical action.

Share stories of how your community is seeking to create faith pathways for people. Pray and think about how to create more faith pathways, for example:

- Have a coffee with a neighbour
- Invite people into your home for a meal
- Run an Alpha course in a home
- Build relationships with people at the community meal or ESL class



Suggested songs

Theme: Creating faith pathways

Songs that call for steps of faith and a response toward Jesus

Song	Artist/Author	Where to find it
<i>It Is Well With My Soul</i>	Horatio Spafford – also several contemporary versions	SASB 741 https://songselect.ccli.com/
<i>Cornerstone (also</i>	Hillsong	https://songselect.ccli.com/
<i>My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less)</i>	Edward Mote	SASB 662
<i>I Will Follow</i>	Chris Tomlin	https://songselect.ccli.com/
<i>Come As You Are</i>	Dave Crowder	https://songselect.ccli.com/
<i>Everything</i>	Tim Hughes	https://songselect.ccli.com/
<i>Christ Is Enough</i>	Jonas Myrin and Reuben Morgan, Hillsong	https://songselect.ccli.com/
<i>The Stand</i>	Joel Houston, Hillsong	https://songselect.ccli.com/



Creating faith pathways

all age worship
discussion

(please draw on any other PPT slides and suggestions in the notes above)

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The Bible encourages us to take care in our life journey – and to seek pathways that lead to a full and flourishing life. The Christian faith sees this in following Jesus, who said that he had come to bring life, and bring it to the full (John 10:10). It is our role as a Christian community to provide different ways to help one another – and others – to find and grow in their faith.

**PPT Think**

- How would you describe your own faith pathway at the moment?
- What are the challenges, barriers and distractions that you face on your faith pathway?

Discuss

- Who have been the people that have helped you on your faith pathway? How have they done that?
- How can we help create faith pathways for one another – and others who do not know Jesus?

PPT Pray

- Thank God for the people who have helped you to grow in your walk with Jesus.
- Ask God to help you continue to grow in faith and clear your own pathway to be more like Jesus.

Act

What can you do this week to grow in your faith walk with Jesus?

- Meet with a Christian friend to pray
- Take some time out to read the Bible, pray and journal about your faith – the challenges, barriers and distractions that you face

What is something you can do to help create a faith pathway for others in the coming weeks?

- Have coffee with a neighbour or a new visitor to church and offer to pray with/for them
- Invite people into your home for a meal
- Host an Alpha course or small group in your home or church